

# EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

## NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS IN TIGHT QUARTERS **Part 1: Understanding Group Dynamics**

Have you ever been on a team before? Maybe soccer or basketball, debate or dance? Every team has its own unique **group dynamics**.

In basketball for instance, each player and the coach are essential to reaching the team goal: scoring points, defending the basket, and ultimately winning the game. Also like basketball, each game is different. New opponents bring new challenges. Teams have to prep for their next game, play to their strengths, and prepare for opposition and opportunities.

### Family Group Dynamics

Did you realize every family has its own group dynamics? Like sports, each family member plays an important, but different, role in contributing to the group dynamic. And those roles change or evolve over time.

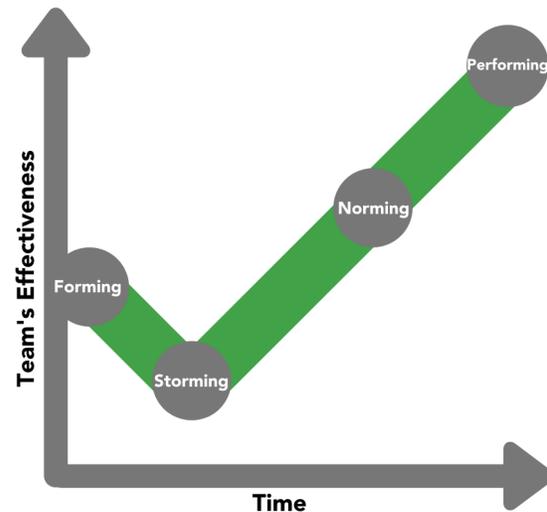
Your role in your family as a teenager is different than it was when you were a toddler and will be different again when you leave home for college and/or a job. If you have brothers or sisters, they too and your parent(s) have evolving roles in the family dynamic.

### During COVID-19 School Closures

Now imagine you are on a sailboat in the ocean with you and your family members. There is not a boat captain—just you and your family—and you’ve never been on a sailboat before(!) You’ve seen sailboats on TV, but you’ve never tried to steer one before. This is definitely uncharted territory.

COVID-19 school closures is a similar kind of curveball, an unexpected twist that requires new

Tuckman’s Team Development Model



skills and strategies.

The first few days off school might have been a pleasant break, but with mounting concerns about COVID-19 consequences, pressures are building up worldwide and likely within your family group dynamic. Sharing space, computers, TV, food, and all day/evening can take its toll. You’ll need new skills to navigate this new terrain. And you’ll need to work effectively with your family to weather this storm.

### Tuckman’s Team Development Model

Luckily, there are decades of research in effective team strategies. Your sailboat comes with a guide. This lesson and the ones to follow will give you and your family what you need to steer your boat and navigate your course.

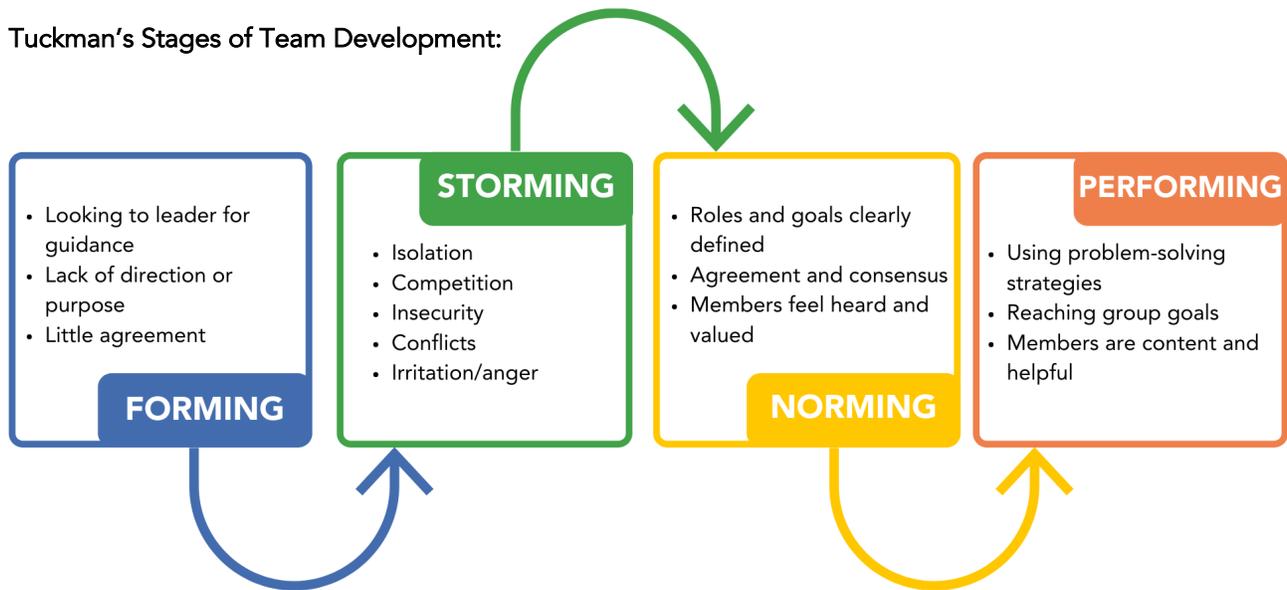
The first step to success is a map of where you’ve been and where you’re going. You’ll need this “bird’s eye” view to prepare for your journey (Tuckman’s Team Development Model above).

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## NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS IN TIGHT QUARTERS Part 1: Understanding Group Dynamics, cont'd

Tuckman's Stages of Team Development:



All teams go through the first two phases of Tuckman's Team Development Model: 1) forming and 2) storming. Unfortunately, some teams get stuck in "storming" and never make it successfully to 3) norming and 4) performing.

For your family sailboat to navigate this storm successfully, you are going to need all four phases:

**1) Forming:** In the first days of a new team or situation, each member is trying to find his/her role within the group and looking to the coach for leadership and teammates for reassurance.

**2) Storming:** Inevitably, team members can struggle to feel valued, included, and confident in a new setting. Some members might jockey for the best spots, while others withdraw and underestimate themselves.

**3) Norming:** Here's where teams can turn it around if they thoughtfully plan how they will treat each other and how they will work together to reach their goal. Without proactive plans, they will fail to get to the next stage.

**4) Performing:** Together, the team maximizes their abilities and collaborates to reach a shared goal. They are conscious of each other's needs and all do their best to contribute. They are better together than any of them are on their own.

Though your family is not a "new team," you are in a new circumstance (school closures) that requires starting at stage 1 (forming) then very purposefully going through stage 3 (norming) to get to the goal of performing well and creating an environment in which everyone feels supported and valued.

**Reflection Question:** Which stage of Tuckman's Team Development do you think your family is in? Why?

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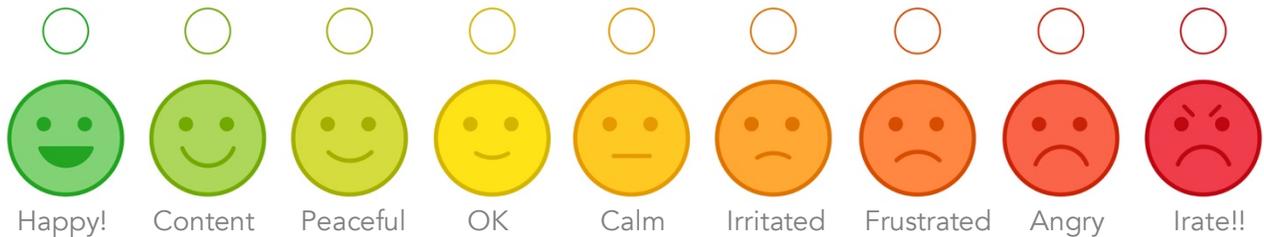
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## NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS IN TIGHT QUARTERS **Part 1: Understanding Group Dynamics, cont'd**

### Self-Awareness is Essential to Team Dynamics

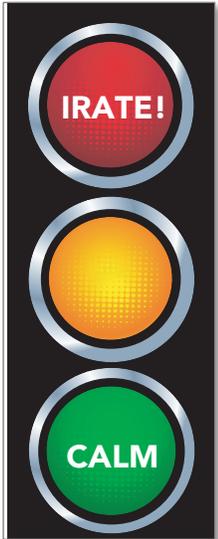
Sharing space and resources, especially for long periods of time, can lead to some frustrations. Even best friends can experience frustrations in tight quarters if they try to be roommates someday.

**What do you think?** During COVID-19 school closures, how would you rate your most common emotions on this scale? Rank order your top three (#1 = the emotion you feel most often):



If you are feeling irritated, frustrated, angry, or irate, which situations “trigger” that emotion? (e.g., sharing the remote control)

How do you know if you’re moving from calm toward irate? What are indicators of low, medium, and high anger levels? Describe the thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviors you experience in each zone:

	THOUGHTS	PHYSICAL FEELINGS	BEHAVIORS
 <p><b>IRATE!</b> (Full-blown angry!)</p>			
<p><b>YELLOW</b> (Getting frustrated)</p>			
<p><b>GREEN</b> (No problems)</p>			

What has helped you soothe strong emotions in the past? When frustrated, what helps you calm down?

**PASSWORD to Video 2:** What is the last stage of Tuckman’s Team Development Model? \_\_\_\_\_

[all small letters, no caps]